

Q What do homeowners need to consider when designing spaces for entertaining?

A It all starts with a detailed lifestyle brief. Your interior designer really needs to understand how you live and how you like to entertain, whether it's formal dinners, casual gatherings with friends or extravagant parties. Based on this, the layout may incorporate a social kitchen with hidden wet kitchen area, an open plan dining room, and a seamless flow into your outdoor space with no psychological or architectural barriers.

Q What are the must-do's for the perfect dining room or integrated entertainment area?

A First and foremost, a proper dining table with enough space to sit and move around comfortably. If casual dining is your style, we recommend an open social kitchen with a separate wet kitchen. This creates an environment for naturally flowing interaction with your guests. It's also important to avoid the use of dramatic colours or artwork that may detract from the dining experience; we suggest soft, warm colours and, ideally, a window or patio doors opening out onto the garden.

Q Are formal dining rooms still in vogue? What are the current trends?

A Formal dining has all but disappeared and many cultures now prefer a more relaxed experience. We would urge homeowners to welcome guests to experience your home in its entirety, not just into a segregated space. You want to showcase your personality and lifestyle, to make them feel welcomed and part of the family. Open kitchen and integrated dining spaces are trending everywhere.

Q Do kitchen and dining spaces demand big budgets?

A You can have an affordable IKEA kitchen or commission a bespoke top-of-the-range option; at the end of the day your focus needs to be on quality, practicality and longevity. Brands such as Smart Kitchens are budget friendly while delivering high quality. The high cost of dining chairs often surprises our clients so it's worth

Ask Marco and Cinzia



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taking your time and hunting around. The dining tabletop should be integrated with the overall aesthetic of your home to continue the flow and feel, or else be neutral. For example, marble could be a key motif used elsewhere in the house. Lighting is also key as you don't want harsh light while you eat. Think soft diffused lighting, from console table lamps to over the table options.

Q Where do people go wrong with open plan entertaining?

A It all comes down to the kitchen. If you want the perfect open plan entertaining area then the kitchen needs to both reflect the style of the overall home and be integrated in such

a way as to be sleek and functional without looking like an everyday kitchen. This means no wall cabinets, no use of bright whites or other classic kitchen palettes and absolutely no cluttered countertops.

Q Any quick tips for affordable renovations?

A Make small but meaningful changes, from switching out the lighting to repainting the walls, different artworks or installing a good quality wooden floor for a visual transformation.

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